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AUTHOR Armstrong, W. Cliff; Goyol, Anthony
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ABSTRACT

Forty-six members of the college of education at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, were surveyed to determine the status of reading instruction within that college. The faculty members taught a total of 114 courses in six departments: health and physical education, vocational education, recreation, special education, elementary education, and secondary education. The subjects completed one instrument designed to collect data concerning the types of activities they engaged in that could positively affect the reading performance of college students, and another instrument designed to reveal the extent to which the professors addressed specific reading skills in their classes. The professors also provided demographic information. The findings revealed that the faculty members were engaged in activities designed to enhance the reading performance of their students. (Copies of the survey instruments are appended.) (FL)

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# The Status of Reading Instruction In The College of Education at Southern University Baton Rouge, Louisiana April 21, 1980

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RESEARCHERS:

W. Cliff Armstrong is a Professor of Education at Southern University

Anthony Goyol is a graduate student in Vocational Education at Southern University, Baton Rouge

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# The Status of Reading Instruction in the College of Education at Southern University

BY: W. Cliff Armstrong and Anthony Goyol

An attempt was made by the Louisiana State Department of Education during the 1979 Fall Semester, through Project SPUR (Special Plan Upgrading Reading), to examine the overall status of reading in the State. The present study is one aspect of the Project and attempts to make an assessment of reading instruction in the College of Education at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Participants in the survey were faculty members in the College who were currently teaching courses in the College thought to be appropriate for the inclusion of various types of reading instruction techniques. Excluded were faculty members who were teaching activity courses such as archery, swimming, and golf.

Data collection instruments were developed by faculty representatives involved in the SPUR college data collection effort. One instrument, "The SPUR Data Collection Instrument," was designed to collect information concerning the types of activities engaged in by college professors which could affect in a positive manner, the reading performance of college students. Specifically, the instrument sought to obtain information regarding the extent to which the faculty in the College (1) assess and evaluate reading abilities of students, (2) adjust teaching methods to accommodate reading abilities, (3) use differentiated assignments to aid students with varying reading abilities, (4) use instructional time for pronunciation and word meaning, and (5) provide instruction in specific study techniques. In addition, the instrument

sought to elicit opinions regarding courses taught in the College which could or should address reading concerns. (See Appendix I, p. 17). Another instrument, "A Supplemental Data Collection Instrument", had as its purpose the obtaining of data which could shed some light on the extent to which professors addressed in their classes (1) language development/vocabulary development, (2) skills of phonetic analysis, structural analysis, and other means of decoding print, (3) comprehension skills, (4) study skills, and (5) developmental psychology as it relates to children's academic development. (See Appendix II, p. 18).

General Characteristics of the Participants

Forty-six faculty members participated in the study, twenty-four males and twenty-two females. More than half of them (58.69%) were older than fifty years of age, and less than five percent were younger than thirty years of age. (Table 1 below shows the age distribution of the faculty.) Most of the faculty (91.31%) had taught in colleges and

Table 1.
Age Distribution of Faculty Members in the SPUR College Reading Instruction Project at Southern University

| Age Range | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| 20 - 30 | 2 | 4.34 |
| 31 - 40 | 8 | 17.39 |
| 41 - 50 | 9 | 19.57 |
| 51 - above | 27 | 58.69 |

universities for a period longer than five years; only 8.69 percent have had less than five years of such experience. (See Table 2.) Nearly half (48.83%) had not had any formal courses in reading. Of those who had taken reading courses, nearly fifty percent had taken three courses and less.

Table 2.
Distribution of College Teaching Experience

| Range (years) | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| 1 - 5 | 4 | 8.69 |
| 6 - 10 | 11 | 23.91 |
| 11 - 20 | 15 | 32.61 |
| 21 - above | 16 | 34.78 |

Faculty members who participated in the survey taught a total of 114 courses in the College of which nineteen were multi-sectional. The courses are classified as graduate (34.21%), undergraduate (57.01%) and graduate/ undergraduate (8.77%). They are distributed in six departments and divisions. (See Table 3.). The nature of the courses are foundations

Table 3.
Distribution of Courses by Departments and Divisions

| Department/Division | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Health/Physical Education | 24 | 21.05 |
| 2. Vocational Education | 9 | 7.89 |
| 3. Recreation | 8 | 6.14 |
| 4. Special Education | 8 | 7.02 |
| 5. Elementary Education | 29 | 25.44 |
| 6. Secondary Education | 37 | 32.45 |

(31.05%), methodology (42.11), measurement (8.77%), research (1.75%) and others (17.54%).

Faculty members were asked to respond to six items on "The Supplemental Data Collection Instrument" and eight items on "The SPUR Data Collection

Instrument" by circling adjacent to each item one of the following responses: No, Seldom, Sometimes, Frequently, Always, and Unsure. For the purpose of analysis, responses were combined as follows: No/Seldom, Sometimes, and Frequently/Always. In addition, faculty members were asked to indicate their sex, age, number of years of teaching experience in colleges and universities, number of formal courses taken in reading, and departmental or divisional affiliations.

Analysis of the Data

Data collected using "The SPUR Data Collection Instrument" reveal that eighty-five or 74.54 percent of the courses surveyed are being taught by faculty members who frequently or always address language development/ vocabulary development. Most of the courses are in the areas of educational methodology (47.06%) and educational foundations (29.41%), and are housed in the departments and divisions of Health/Physical Education (23.53%), Secondary Education (25.88%), and Elementary Education (22.35%).

Slightly more than fifty percent of the faculty members teaching the courses are males (54.12%), older than fifty years of age (50.59%), and have had more than ten years of teaching experience in colleges and universities (52.94%). Approximately thirty percent of them have taken more than three formal courses in reading.

Members of the faculty who responded seldom or no are teaching sixteen or 14.04 percent of the courses. Nearly forty percent are foundations courses and the remaining sixty percent are equally distributed among methodology, measurements, and research. They are housed, for the most part, in the Departments of Elementary Education (22.35%) and Secondary Education (25.88%).

Most of the faculty teaching the courses are males (56.25%), and more than fifty years of age (62.50%). Six or 37.50 percent of them

have taken more than three formal courses in reading; eleven or 68.75 percent have had more than ten years of teaching experience in colleges and universities. (See Appendix III, Charts Ia, Ib, pp. 19-20).

Ninety or 78.95 percent of the courses are taught by faculty members who always or frequently address comprehension skills in their courses. Most of these courses are in the areas of educational methodology (45.56%) and foundations (31.11%). For the most part, the courses are housed in Secondary Education (27.78%), Elementary Education (25.56%), and Health/ Physical Education (22.22%).

More than half of the faculty members are older than fifty years (51.11%) and many of them (58.79%) have taught in colleges and universities for more than ten years. Most of them (31.04%) have taken more than three formal courses in reading, and approximately 53.00 percent are males.

Only eight or 7.02 percent of the courses are taught by members of the faculty who seldom or never address comprehension skills in their courses. Four or fifty percent of the courses are housed in the Department of Elementary Education, and 37.50 percent in the Department of Secondary Education. A majority of the courses are in the areas of methodology (43.33%) and foundations (36.67%).

Regarding the characteristics of the teachers who teach courses in which comprehension skills are seldom or never addressed, it was observed that approximately half of them are more than fifty years of age; most (62.50%) have taught in colleges and universities for more than ten years, and many (57.00%) have taken more than three courses in reading. Also, fifty percent of them are males. (Appendix III, Charts IIa-IIb, pp. 21-22).

The skills of phonetic analysis, structural analysis, and other means of decoding print are addressed in fifty-eight or 50.88% of the courses always or frequently; while thirty or 26.32 percent of the courses seldom or never address these skills. Many of the courses

addressing these skills always or frequently are offered in the Division of Health/Physical Education (27.59%), and in the Department of Secondary Education (25.86%). Most courses are in the areas of educational foundations (32.76%) and methodology (32.76%).

More than half (53.45%) of the courses are taught by faculty members who are more than fifty years old (53.45%), and who have had more than ten years of teaching experience in colleges and universities (56.89%). Approximately thirty-one percent have taken more than three formal courses in reading, and thirty or 51.72 percent of them are males.

The largest percentage of courses in which the skills of phonetic analysis, structural analysis, and other means of decoding print are seldom or never addressed are housed in the Departments of Secondary Education (40.00%) and Elementary Education (30.00%). They are basically in the areas of methodology (22.41%) and foundations (18.79%). Faculty members teaching the courses have taken more than three courses in reading (63.33%), have had more than ten years of teaching experience (56.66%), are more than fifty years old (60.00%), and are fifty percent males. (See Appendix III, Chart IIIa-IIIb, pp. 23, 24).

More than eighty percent (82.46%) of the courses always or frequently address study skills. Most of these courses are offered in the Departments and Divisions of Secondary Education (28.72%), Elementary Education (25.53%), and Health/Physical Education (28.72%); they are distributed among the areas of methodology (44.68%), foundations (34.04%) and "others" (21.28%). Those teaching the courses are over fifty years of age (54.13%), and have had more than ten years of teaching experience (52.13%). A substantial percentage of them have had more than three courses in reading (28.36%). Approximately fifty-one percent of them are males.

A very small percentage of the courses (6.14%) seldom or never address

study skills. Further analysis of the seven courses in this category reveal that three or 42.85 percent are offered through the Department of Elementary Education and 57.14 percent are offered in the Department of Secondary Education. The courses are almost evenly distributed among the areas of methods, measurements, foundations and research. Less than half of the courses (42.85%) are taught by females. Most of the faculty (57.14%) are more than fifty years of age, and more than half (57.17%) have had more than ten years of teaching experience in a college or university. Many of them (85.71%) have taken more than six formal courses in reading, and are females (42.85%). (See Appendix III, Charts IVa, IVb, pp. 25-26).

The subject area of developmental psychology as it relates to academic development is addressed in 81 or 71.05 percent of the courses always or frequently. These courses are distributed in the Departments and Divisions of Health/Physical Education, Elementary Education and Secondary Education; each having 24.69 percent. Further analysis of the nature of the courses show them to be distributed as follows: methods (46.91%), foundations (30.87%), and all others (22.22%).

Many of these courses (73.07%) are taught by teachers who are in excess of forty years of age, and who have taught in colleges and universities for at least six years (84.88%). More than half of them have had three courses in reading (31.87%) and are males.

Twelve or 10.52 percent of the courses seldom or never address the subject area of developmental psychology as it relates to children's academic development. Two-thirds of these courses are housed in the Department of Secondary Education and approximately one-fourth are housed in the Department of Elementary Education. The courses are evenly distributed in the areas of foundations, methods, and measurements.

Approximately fifty-eight percent of these courses are taught by male faculty members; more than three-fourths are older than forty years old, and have had more than ten years of college or university teaching. One-fourth (25.00%) have had more than three formal courses in reading. (See Appendix III, Charts Va, Vb, pp. 27-28).

Most members of the faculty feel that the courses which they teach could (71.02%) or should (63.16%) address reading concerns always or frequently. In more than half of the courses, teachers address these concerns in ways other than those indicated in this report; however, no attempt was made to identify the ways used by them. (See Appendix III, Charts VIa-VIIIb, pp. 29-34).

Data collected using "The Supplemental Data Collection Instrument" revealed that twenty-eight or 60.87 percent of the teachers frequently or always made assessments and evaluations of their students' reading abilities as part of their courses; nine or 19.62 percent seldom or never perform these activities. One-half of those who do frequently or always are males and two-thirds are fifty-one years or older. Twenty (71.42%) have had more than ten years of teaching experience in a college or university, and seventeen or 60.71 percent have taken at least one formal course in reading. On the other hand, of those who seldom or never make assessments or evaluations of the reading abilities of these students, two-thirds are males; 44.44 percent are more than fifty years of age. Approximately fifty percent (55.55%) have had in excess of ten years of teaching experience, and 88.88 percent have taken three or less formal courses in reading. (See Appendix IV, Chart I, p. 35).

Approximately sixty percent (60.87%) of the twenty-eight faculty members frequently or always make adjustments in their teaching methods to accommodate the varying reading abilities of their students; 10.87

percent of them seldom or never make such adjustments. Those who make adjustments are, for the most part, older than fifty years of age (57.14%), have had more than ten years of college or university teaching experience (75.00%), and have taken from one to six formal courses in reading (50.00%). A large majority of those responding seldom or no are males (80.00%). They are in excess of forty years of age (80.00%), and have taught in colleges and universities for more than five years (60.00%). None have taken more than three formal courses in reading, in fact, 60.00 percent have not taken any formal course in the area of reading instruction. (See Appendix IV, Chart II, p. 36).

Nearly forty percent (39.13%) of the teachers always or frequently make differentiated assignments in completing their course requirements for different students because of their reading abilities; another 43.38 percent seldom or never make use of differentiated assignments in their courses. For those who always or frequently make such assignments, fifty percent are males; more than three-fourths are in excess of fifty years old, and more than three-fourths (77.77%) have had more than ten years of college or university teaching experience. Fifty percent have taken more than three formal courses in reading. Those who seldom or never make such assignments are fifty percent female and more than forty years old (70.00%). Fifty percent of them have had more than ten years of college or university teaching experience. Fifty-five percent have not taken any formal courses in reading and only forty percent have taken from one to three courses. (See Appendix IV, Chart III, p.

Most of the teachers (76.09%) provide instructions in specific study techniques for students in their classes; less than five percent (4.34%) seldom or do not. Of those who do, more than half (57.14%) are older than fifty years; 71.41 percent have taught at the collegiate or

university level for more than ten years, and 35.71 percent have taken more than three formal courses in reading. More than half are females. For those who seldom or never provide specific study instructions, all are males and half are more than fifty years old. None have taught in a college or university for more than ten years and none have taken more than three formal courses in reading. (See Appendix IV, Chart IV, page 38.)

Many faculty members (56.53%) address the reading needs of their students frequently or always in ways other than those mentioned in this report, a smaller percentage (19.57%) seldom or never address reading needs in ways other than those previously mentioned. Of those who do, approximately half are males; 57.69 percent are older than fifty years of age; 73.08 percent have taught in colleges and universities for more than ten years, and 38.46 percent have taken between four and ten formal courses in reading. Those who seldom or never address the reading needs of their students in ways other than those discussed in this report are more than fifty percent female (56.00%). Two-thirds of them are more than forty years of age. Most (88.88%) have taken three or less formal courses in reading, and one-third have taught in colleges and universities for more than ten years. (See Appendix IV, Chart V, p. 39).

Thirty-eight (82.61%) of the 46 teachers involved in the study frequently or always devote instructional time to the pronunciation and meaning of vocabulary specific to their courses; however, six (13.04%) seldom or never use instructional time for this activity. Twenty-two or 13.04 percent of those who devote such time are more than fifty years old; thirty (78.95%) have taught in colleges and universities for more than ten years, and 28.95 percent have taken more than three

formal courses in reading. For those who responded no or seldom to the item, four or 66.66 percent are males; fifty percent are more than fifty years of age; two-thirds have taught at the college or university level for more than ten years; two-thirds have not taken any formal courses in reading, and only 33.33 percent have taken from one to three courses. (See Appendix IV, Chart VI, p. 40.)

Summary and Conclusions

The findings of this report indicate that the extent to which faculty members in the College of Education at Southern University in Baton Rouge address reading instruction techniques in their classes is affected by several variables. These include: sex, number of formal courses taken in the area of reading, the nature of the course, age, number of years of teaching experience in college and universities, and divisional or departmental affiliation.

Faculty members address (1) language development/vocabulary development, (2) the skills of phonetic analysis, structural analysis, and other means of decoding print, (3) comprehension skills, (4) study skills, and (5) the subject area of developmental psychology as it relates to the academic development of students in a majority of the courses surveyed. More than 70.00 percent of the courses address these skills always or frequently with one exception being the skills of phonetic analysis, structural analysis, and other means of decoding print which is addressed in only 50.88 percent of the courses. A ranking of the skills based on the responses, always or frequently, reveal the following order: study skills (82.46%), comprehension skills (78.95%), language development/vocabulary development (74.56%), subject area of developmental psychology (71.05%), and skills of phonetic analysis, structural analysis, and

other means of decoding print (50.88%).

Regarding the nature of the courses surveyed, it was noted that reading instruction skills are addressed in 81.76 percent of the foundations courses, 77.08 percent of the methodology courses, 44.00 percent of the measurement courses, 20.00 percent of the research courses, and in 74.00 percent of the courses labeled "others". Further, it was observed that the Division of Vocational Education had the largest percentage of courses (90.28%) which address the skills, followed by Special Education (89.06%), Health/Physical Education (78.65%), Elementary Education (62.50%), Recreation (57.14%) and Secondary Education (55.40%).

The sex of faculty members has little or no bearing on responses concerning whether or not they always or frequently address reading instruction skills in their courses. In fact, 71.66 percent of such courses are being taught by males and 71.48 percent are being taught by females.

It was also noted that more than seventy percent of the faculty in each range--denoting the number of courses taken in reading--teach courses that frequently or always address reading instruction skills. To be specific, 80.00 percent of those having taken eleven or more courses, 74.55 percent of those having taken seven to ten courses, 71.18 percent of those having taken from one to three courses, 71.00 percent of those having taken from four to six courses, and 70.63 percent of those who have not had any formal courses in reading, address always or frequently reading instruction skills in their courses. Likewise, 85.00 percent of the courses being taught by teachers who always or frequently address the skills are between the ages of twenty and thirty, 84.21 percent are between thirty-one and forty, 70.85 percent are older than fifty years, and 60.71 percent are between the ages of forty-one and fifty. Regarding

years of teaching experience of those who teach courses that always or frequently address reading instruction skills, it was noted that 80.00 percent have had from six to ten years of experience, 75.80 percent have had more than twenty years of experience, 63.57 percent have had between eleven and twenty years of experience, and 61.66 percent have had one to five years of experience.

Faculty members in the College of Education perform activities designed to improve the reading performance of students in their classes always or frequently. Based on the percentage of faculty members who responded to questions concerning whether or not they perform the reading instruction activities frequently or always, it was observed that (1) the highest percentage (82.61%) devote instructional time to the pronunciation and meaning of vocabulary specific to their courses, (2) the smallest percentage (39.13%) make differentiated assignments in completing course requirements for different students because of their reading abilities, and (3) approximately 60.0 percent make assessments or evaluations, and adjustments in teaching methods.

It was further observed that the extent to which these activities are performed in the classroom is affected by the variables of sex, years of teaching experience, the number of formal courses taken in reading, and age. Viewing the activities collectively, it was noted that a slightly higher percentage (63.33%) of female teachers perform the activities than do male teachers (58.33%). Regarding the age of teachers as a factor, 87.50 percent between twenty and thirty, 67.31 percent between thirty-one and forty, 44.44 percent between forty-one and fifty, and 67.31 percent of those who are more than fifty years perform the activities always or frequently.

Faculty members with the greatest number of years of teaching

experience in colleges and universities seem to perform the activities more frequently than do those with less number of years. In this regard, the activities are performed by 65.63 percent of those with twenty-one or more years of experience, 65.00 percent with eleven to twenty years, 50.00 percent with six to ten years, and 33.33 percent with one to five years.

Most (91.67%) faculty members who have had seven to ten formal courses in reading seem to perform the activities always or frequently. Likewise, 84.38 percent of those having taken from four to six courses, and approximately 50.00 percent of those who have not had any formal courses in reading and those who have taken eleven or more courses perform the activities frequently.

It can be concluded that faculty members in the College of Education at Southern University, to a large extent, are engaged in activities designed to enhance the reading performance of their students. The following statements support this observation:

1. Skills of phonetic analysis, structural analysis, and other means of decoding print are addressed, to lesser extent than other reading instructional skills mentioned in the survey.
2. Reading instructional skills are addressed in foundations and methodology courses more frequently than in other courses in the college.
3. The greatest percentage of courses that address reading instructional skills are housed in the Divisions of Vocational Education and Special Education.
4. Male faculty members address reading instructional skills in their classes as frequently as females.

5. The age of faculty members and the number of courses taken in reading have no appreciable effect on the extent to which faculty members address reading instructional skills in their courses.
6. A greater percentage of faculty members who have had more than six years of teaching experience in colleges and universities address reading skills in their courses than those having had less than six years.
7. Faculty members address more frequently reading instructional activities than differentiated assignments in completing course requirements for different students because of their varying reading abilities.
8. Faculty members often make assessments and evaluations, and adjustments in teaching methods to accommodate differences in reading abilities.

APPENDICES

# APPENDIX I

## SPUR DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT
## LOUISIANA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Please provide: Date:

Course Title: _____ Catalog Number: _____ Graduate: ( ) Undergraduate: ( ) Both: ( ) Your Name: _____

Optional:

( ) Years College Teaching ( ) Number Courses Taken in Reading Age: ( ) 20-30 ( ) 31-40 ( ) 40-50 ( ) 51+ ( ) Male ( ) Female

This instrument is designed to collect information relative to what is being taught in colleges of education which might impact reading instruction in the field. We are interested in what is being presented to education students which might fall under the general umbrella of reading. Reading is to be thought of as a process subject, not merely a content subject. Faculty identification is requested for coding purposes only. Total anonymity will be maintained. No identifying data will be shared. Questions 1-4 focus on the Louisiana Minimum Standards/Maximum Goals for Reading, a document developed by Louisiana educators in compliance with Act 621 of the Legislature.

| | CIRCLE APPLICABLE TERM | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. This course (or part of it) addresses language development/ vocabulary development | No | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Always | Unsure |
| 2. This course (or part of it) addresses the skills of phonetic analysis, structural analysis and other means of decoding print | No | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Always | Unsure |
| 3. This course (or part of it) addresses comprehension skills | No | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Always | Unsure |
| 4. This course (or part of it) addresses study skills | No | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Always | Unsure |
| 5. The subject area of developmental psychology is addressed in this course (i.e., large and small motor coordination, maturation levels, learning theory, etc.) as it applies to children's academic development | No | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Always | Unsure |
| 6. This course addresses reading in ways other than specified in questions 1-5 | No | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Always | Unsure |
| 7. This course could address reading concerns | No | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Always | Unsure |
| 8. This course should address reading concerns | No | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Always | Unsure |

PLEASE ADD ANY COMMENTS YOU MIGHT WISH TO MAKE:

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## APPENDIX II

SUPPLEMENTAL
DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

Please provide: Date:

Abbreviated Titles of
Courses You Teach 1979-80:

Optional:

( ) Years College Teaching ( ) Number Courses Taken in Reading Age: ( ) 20-30 ( ) 31-40 ( ) 40-50 ( ) 51+ ( ) Male ( ) Female

These questions were developed by faculty representatives involved in the SPUR college data collection effort. The representatives believed that the information which would accrue from the analysis would be of benefit both to the colleges and the overall examination of the status of reading in the state. Course titles are requested for coding purposes only. Total personal anonymith will be maintained.

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Do you make any assessment or evaluation of your students' reading abilities as part of your courses? ..... | No | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Always | Unsure |
| 2. Do you make adjustments in your teaching methods to accommodate your students' reading abilities? ..... | No | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Always | Unsure |
| 3. Do you make differentiated assignments in completing course requirements for different students because of their reading ability? ..... | No | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Always | Unsure |
| 4. Do you devote instructional time to the pronunciation and meaning of vocabulary specific to your courses? ..... | No | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Always | Unsure |
| 5. Do you provide instructions in any specific study technique(s) for your students in your courses? ..... | No<br>No | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Always | Unsure |
| 6. Do you address the reading needs of your students in ways other than specified in questions 1-5? ..... | No | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Always | Unsure |

PLEASE ADD ANY COMMENTS:



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